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Thursday, June 5, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tourism

PROVINCE ANNOUNCES BUY PEI INITIATIVE

CHARLOTTETOWN, PEI -- With the growing interest in local food, the provincial government has announced a new initiative to support the development, promotion and marketing of Prince Edward Island products to Islanders and visitors. Under the new Buy PEI initiative, projects will be undertaken to increase public awareness and knowledge of local food products, promote their benefits to producers and the economy, and assist producers and businesses in marketing and promotion. There will also be efforts to increase awareness and use of Island products in schools.

The Buy PEI initiative was announced today by Agriculture Minister Neil LeClair and Tourism Minister Valerie Docherty. It is part of a $500,000 allocation in the recent provincial budget, and is aimed at linking the Buy PEI initiative with a regional Buy Atlantic strategy.

"The buy local concept represents an important opportunity for domestic market growth of the Prince Edward Island agriculture and food industry," said Mr. LeClair. "This program will support producers and businesses to meet the growing demand for local food products."

"Our goal is to increase public awareness, support, demand and availability of Prince Edward Island food products for the residents and visitors of Prince Edward Island," said Ms. Docherty. "This program involves a number of government departments and industry groups, and the benefits are expected to be realized in the upcoming season."

The three components of the Buy PEI initiative are an umbrella promotions and advertising campaign through the local media and special events, a business and market development component for producers, farmers' markets and commodity groups and an agri-food promotion campaign to be carried out by local groups and institutions. The marketing program is to be established.

As part of the Buy PEI initiative, a ministerial advisory committee has been established to provide advice and recommendations on the marketing goals and strategies. The committee includes representatives from agriculture, tourism, seafood, retail, food service industries, and media and consumer representatives.

To measure the effectiveness of the Buy PEI initiative, a consumer survey will be undertaken prior to and following the campaign.

BACKGROUNDER

The goal of the Buy PEI initiative is to increase public awareness, support, demand and availability of Prince Edward Island agriculture and food products for residents and visitors.

Financial assistance will be available under two components of the initiative.

Business and Market Development

The objective of this component is to build and enhance the local food network through increasing the sale of Prince Edward Island agriculture and food products by farmers, farm and farmers' markets and agriculture commodity and marketing boards.

Eligible projects must improve the visibility and/or availability of locally produced products and those who produce them; attract a wider range of clientele to local products; increase promotional activity, and support the sale and consumption of Prince Edward Island products.

Eligible expenses are costs associated with the implementation of the project. The maximum contribution per applicant in a fiscal year is $10,000. Approved projects must be completed within the fiscal year.

Programs components include on-premise signage; promotion; training, and new product development/market launch.

Agri-food Promotion Program

The objective of this program is to increase the awareness, demand and consumption of fresh, high quality products through groups (e.g. youth groups, 4-H, WI, agricultural clubs, institutions and municipalities.

Eligible projects must improve the visibility and knowledge of locally produced products and those who produce them; make the connection between farming and the agri-food sector; encourage the benefits of using locally produced foods, and create an awareness of the value of agriculture and agri-food.

The level of assistance is up to 50 percent of the costs of a project to a maximum of $1,000. The maximum provincial contribution for an applicant is $2,000. Approved projects must be completed within the fiscal year.

Promotions campaign

The Buy PEI initiative will be supported through promotions, advertising and special events. Support will also be provided for education and training.

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